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ABSTRACT

Phoenix Reception and Assessment Center (PRAC) is a non-secure detention and assessment center for up to 15 Wayne County delinquent, adolescent males who have been committed to the Michigan Department of Social Services for care, treatment and supervision. Adolescents, ages 12 through 18, are eligible for placement at Phoenix according to the following admission priorities: (1) top priority is given to newly committed juveniles with an open custody level allowing non-secure, supervised community access; (2) second priority is given to post-commitment juveniles; and (3) neglect/abuse wards may be placed only in open programs unless the youth is charged with a criminal offense. PRAC incorporates a youth advocate program which includes a peer group process, a token economy, individual contracting, a Youth Discipline Policy, and daily time structuring. Residents are provided with clear standards of behavior in the form of target behaviors which include rules and consequences. Residents are divided into groups which meet together and members are challenged to develop plans to assist one another in behaving responsibly and constructively. While verbal efforts to calm and de-escalate residents are employed and the use of physical intervention and restraint are avoided whenever possible, temporary physical restraint is used to protect people and property when a resident's behavior is out of control. PRAC provides individualized education on the premises and includes assessment and an appropriate type of treatment placement. Residents are successfully released from the program when they are moved to an ongoing treatment agency. Upon release, a discharge report is completed by PRAC staff, summarizing the assessment of the resident and the services provided. (ABL)

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Michigan Department of Social Services
Office of Children and Youth Services
Bureau of Juvenile Justice Services
Residential Care Division

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

for the

PHOENIX RECEPTION AND ASSESSMENT CENTER

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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
WAYNE RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
PHOENIX RECEPTION AND ASSESSMENT CENTER

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Mission and Goals

Phoenix Reception and Assessment Center (P.R.A.C.) is a non-secure detention and assessment center for up to 15 Wayne County delinquent, adolescent males, who have been committed to the Michigan Department of Social Services (M.D.S.S.) for care, treatment and supervision. P.R.A.C. functions as a temporary placement, which helps bridge a youth's transition from the court system to the M.D.S.S. placement system.

P.R.A.C. is administered by the Wayne Residential Services (W.R.S.) of the Residential Care Division (R.C.D.) of the M.D.S.S. It is part of a network of detention alternative placement agencies (D.A.P.) in Wayne County, and as such, participates in pursuing the following objectives:

1. To remove committed State wards from the W.C.Y.H. within 72 work hours of M.D.S.S. acceptance;

2. To provide certain and timely detention services appropriate to a youth's level of risk to the community;

3. To provide comprehensive diagnostic services to assist in the specification of problems, goals, treatment strategies and identification of an appropriate treatment placement;

4. To ensure, within a reasonable level of risk, that the youth is available for movement home or to a treatment placement, and

5. To provide detained youth with high quality residential educational, medical, counseling and related services.

Eligibility for Placement

Youth are assigned to Phoenix by the Regional Reception and Intake Unit for Wayne County. This unit coordinates and facilitates placement into all Reception and Assessment agencies, based on risk assessment factors, custody needs and protection of public safety.

Adolescents, ages 12 through 18, are eligible for placement at Phoenix as described below:

1. Admission priority is given to newly committed juveniles. Youth are assigned to a DAP agency corresponding to the custody level determined by the Regional Reception and Intake Unit. Custody level determination is based on assessment of the following factors.

   - Living arrangement prior to detention
   - Previous placements
   - Age at adjudication
   - Family members with criminal record
   - Peer relationships
   - Truancy
   - Type(s) of criminal behavior
   - Community adjustment problems
   - Probation violation(s)
   - Family relationships
   - Drug and/or alcohol use
   - Offender's attitude toward victim

   The above assessment results in a numerical score which corresponds to a custody level:

   - Open (non-secure, supervised community access)
   - Medium-Secure (perimeter security emphasized, no community access)
   - Secure (room security, as well as perimeter security, no community access)

   Phoenix provides care to male adolescents in an open setting. Youth have access to community resources and institutions only under direct staff supervision. Youth may receive visits from family members on-site. There are no home visits or "free time".

2. Second level admissions priority is given to post-commitment juveniles as follows:

   - Youth detained in a county facility and immediate removal is ordered;
   - Youth charged with a new felony crime and not presently in detention;
   - At-large youth (truancy status) apprehended by police;
   - Youth released unsuccessfully from a treatment placement, where MDSS received proper notice of termination.

3. Neglect/abuse wards may be placed only in open programs unless the youth is charged with a criminal offense and an order is issued for secure detention by the Juvenile Division of Probate Court. Neglect/abuse wards admitted will usually have experienced multiple placement failures in other treatment programs.

Neglect youth who have been clinically designated as developmentally disabled, mentally ill, drug dependent, and/or suicidal are considered inappropriate for placement in a Reception and Assessment Center. However, depending on population characteristics and dynamics at the time of referral, Directors may exercise discretion in the application of these exclusionary factors.

P.R.A.C. Program Services

While detained at the Assessment Center, youth receive residential, educational, medical assessment, mental health and other related services. These services are described below.

P.R.A.C. Residential Services - Youth Advocate Program

During their stay at P.R.A.C., residents are involved in the Youth Advocate Program (Y.A.P.), which is designed to meet the following goals:

1. To promote and support responsible and helpful behavior within the context of a short-term, transitional program.

2. To maintain an environment that is psychologically and physically safe for residents and staff.

3. To provide assessment information, which will assist in the development of a resident's initial treatment plan.

Y.A.P. Components

In order to meet these goals, the Y.A.P. incorporates the peer group process, a token economy with a levels system, individual contracting, a Youth Discipline Policy and daily time structuring. All of these components comprise the Y.A.P. The core of the program is organized around the peer group process. The residents are provided clear standards of behavior in the form of target behaviors, which include rules and consequences. In addition, each resident develops individualized behavioral contract goals with the assistance of the staff team. Incentives in the form of tokens and privileges are provided for performing the expected behaviors. This process is related to assessment and placement planning by focusing on the "here and now"; not long-term behavioral change.

Token Economy

The token economy provides positive reinforcement for responsible and helpful behavior. Tokens are earned for achieving behavioral expectations throughout the day. Behavioral expectations are

called target behaviors. Each target behavior is assigned a token value. Residents can earn up to 100 tokens per day, or 700 tokens per week. Residents may purchase items they value in the P.R.A.C. token store with the tokens they have earned.

Levels System

In addition to earning tokens and being able to purchase items in the token store, the total number of tokens earned per week determines movement in the levels system. Levels are tied to privileges. There are three levels at P.R.A.C., namely, Orientation, Level I and Level II. Residents who earn 80%, or 560 tokens to 629 tokens in a week, earn Level I privileges. Residents who earn 90%, or 630 tokens or more in a week, earn Level II privileges. Level status is redetermined weekly. Residents who earn enough tokens to make Level II are behaving most responsibly. The more responsible a resident is, the more privileges he earns. Besides target behaviors that describe behavioral expectations for activities throughout each day, the residents are provided 10 basic house rules.

P.R.A.C. House Rules

1. Treat others with courtesy and respect.

   No abusive language
   No verbal threats
   No name calling
   No fighting

2. Follow staff directives.

3. Attend school.

4. Be a positive group member.

5. Maintain personal hygiene.

6. Respect the property of the center and of others. You will be held responsible for any property damage you cause.

7. Keep your room clean, and help keep the rest of the center clean.

8. No weapons, drugs, alcohol or other items that are in violation of the law.

9. No truancy.

10. No smoking.

Youth Discipline Policy

Consequences for violating the house rules are outlined in the Youth Discipline Policy, which provides guidelines to P.R.A.C. staff for responding with consistency to inappropriate behavior. The discipline policy is directly related to the token economy and the levels system, in that residents who violate rules fail to earn tokens, and as a result, fail to earn a higher level.

Contracts

Individualized behavior contracting provides each resident with the opportunity to work on a specific behavior problem, or to improve or maintain a specific behavior. Residents can earn up to 30 tokens per day for meeting contract behavior goals. Youth contracting is integrated into the peer group process. Contracts are presented, critiqued and revised in group meetings..

Daily Time Structuring

The daily time structure is described in the P.R.A.C. Operational Schedule. Each part of the day, from wake-up until bedtime is structured, or planned. Target behaviors are directly related to each activity in the day. By structuring the day, the residents are constructively and productively engaged in activities throughout the day. The daily activities include waking up, attending to personal hygiene, making beds, preparing for meals, doing household chores, eating meals, participating in group meetings, attending school, participating in recreational activities and getting ready for bed.

Some recreational activities in the community are considered privileges and only residents who have demonstrated responsible, helpful behavior, and are either on n Level I or Level II, are allowed to participate in these activities. However, recreational activities are planned for all residents, either in-house or in the community.

Youth Advocate Group Process

The Youth Advocate group process integrates all components of the assessment and residential program. During daily group meetings, individual movement in the token economy levels system, attempts at meeting contract goals, and adherence to the P.R.A.C. House Rules are reviewed and discussed.

In the Y.A. group program, the relationships that develop naturally among the members of the peer group are channeled in a positive way by promoting responsible , helpful attitudes and behaviors among the members of the group. This is guided by staff supervision.

Throughout the day, the group of peers is expected to function together to support and promote responsible, helpful behaviors, and to confront (check) harmful, self-defeating behaviors. In addition, the group meets 5 days per week in problem-solving sessions that focus on the here and now, and not on problems of the past. Group sessions may be convened at any time, however, to promote situationally specific problem-solving.

Principles of the Youth Advocate Group Program

Y.A.P. is organized around the following principles:

1. The group program allows the resident group to be divided into a more manageable and controllable number of residents, which can be especially critical in a transitional program.

2. The group program assists in the establishment of a peer group discipline model. Members are expected to check one another's behavior. Under staff supervision, residents assist in the control and restraint of peers.

3. The group program establishes a peer process for daily problem-solving and decision-making.

4. Residents support one another to set goals and confront progress.

5. A peer group process is used as an assessment tool in evaluating behavioral strengths and weaknesses of each member of the group.

Structure/Organization of the Y.A.P. Group Process

1. Residents are divided into two groups of up to 8 residents each. When there are 5 or less residents, they form one group.

2. Criteria for group assignment may be based on behavior, resident size, number of residents per group, etc.

3. All residents are provided with the opportunity to participate in the group process. Alternate plans and care are provided for those few who cannot benefit from, or contribute to, the peer group process.

4. Residents who are unable to participate in the peer group process are assigned to one Youth Specialist staff who supervises the non-group residents. Under the leadership of the House Manager, the Youth Specialist plans individualized recreational, leisure activities for the non-group residents.

Group Process: Daily Living and Peer Influence

1. Groups are challenged and assisted by staff to develop plans for helping one another behave responsibly and constructively during their daily living at the center. Actual meetings are brief, limited and focused. Successful and effective peer influence occurs outside of meetings, when residents support helpful behavior and check self-defeating behavior.

   Staff must resist the tendency to "solve" peer problems for youth. Instead, they must use the natural peer process to influence positive conduct. Staff will thus be keeping problem solving focused on the group. As problems arise, staff will allow and support the group to define and resolve them. Staff must be present to ensure that the process is orderly and controlled. Physical aggression and unhealthy verbal exchange are not permitted.

2. Verbal efforts to calm and de-escalate residents are used to avoid use of physical intervention and restraint. However, temporary physical restraint is appropriate to protect people and property when a resident's behavior is out of control. Appropriate restraint may be applied by staff directly, or by the peer group under the immediate and continuous supervision of staff. Appropriate restraint for an out-of-control resident must be benign and protective in nature, and it should be continued only for a minimum period of time necessary to permit a resident to regain self-control. Peer restraint is exercised within the context of a peer group problem-solving design consistent with the P.R.A.C. Guidelines for the Use of Group Restraint, and with the W.R.S. discipline policy. (See Policy Item 608.) Incidents of restraint are documented on the P.R.A.C. Restraint Report.

Youth Advocate Group Meetings

The purpose for daily group meetings is for residents to convene in a structured, trusting environment, in order to discuss issues pertinent to group living. Most common subjects include:

- each resident's success in the token economy,
- successes and problems that a resident has had since the last group meeting,
- degree of each resident living up to his weekly contract goals, and
- school behavior.

Group meetings are held 5 days per week, in order to have a consistent, meaningful and productive way of addressing residents' needs and concerns. However, a meeting can be called at any time, when a problem arises that needs to be addressed by the group; under staff guidance.

Format of the Group Meeting

The daily group meetings follow a specific agenda, which includes choosing a peer group leader, sharing success experiences, identifying problems, problem-solving, contracts, school behavior and group concerns.

1. Choosing a Peer Group Leader:

   The first task of the group meeting is to decide which group member has shown enough responsibility and positive behavior to merit being chosen as the one who leads the group. This is determined by the level system, contract achievement and acceptance by the staff group leader and peer group.

   Every effort is made by the staff group leader to assure that every group member is participating in the discussion. The staff asks questions of each resident in order to draw out a response, rather than lecturing the residents. The object is to teach the group to be as self-reliant and responsible as possible. By helping each other, residents can experience a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. By choosing a peer group leader for the group meeting, the peer group is given the responsibility and the opportunity to help each other. The staff leader is there to facilitate, not dominate, the group.

2. Sharing Success Experiences (Accomplishments):

   The peer group leader begins by asking each group member, and the group as a whole, about successes and accomplishments since the last group meeting. The success experiences can be as minor or major as a resident feels is appropriate to acknowledge.

3. Problem-Solving Steps:

Once each resident has gone over his accomplishments for the past 24 hours, the peer leader asks each person in the group whether or not they agree. When problems have been identified, the following problem-solving steps are used:

a. Identifying the Problem:

Each resident, who has had a problem, is asked to explain the situation. Emphasis is placed on what happened, and what the resident's involvement in the problem was. Other group members may be asked to explain what happened. The resident is then asked whether he realizes what he did is a problem.

b. Discussing Positive Behavior Alternatives:

Once the problem has been identified, the group goes on to giving help on how the resident could have behaved differently, so as to prevent the problem behavior from occurring again. The resident is also encouraged to think of ways this problem could have been avoided.

c. Making a Commitment:

Once the alternatives are discussed, the resident who had the problem chooses one or two appropriate ways of behaving in a similar situation in the future. This commitment can be used by the group as a means of keeping the resident accountable for his behavior.

d. Motivation for Making a Commitment to Behave Appropriately:

When making a commitment to behave appropriately, the resident is asked why he plans to choose an appropriate way to behave. He is asked what good it will do him in the future to behave in a responsible, helpful way. By identifying a reason for choosing to behave appropriately, the resident is better prepared to live up to his commitment.

4. Weekly Contracts (Renewed Every Friday):

Each resident sets goals to deal with problems in a weekly contract that is developed with input from staff. Contracts address the behavior patterns which seem to be emerging in a resident's performance, relationships, or any other aspect of his life at P.R.A.C.

During daily group meetings, each resident and the group are asked how well they feel each resident is living up to his contract. If necessary, a resident is given support and advice as to how he can achieve the goals in his contract in the future.

5. School Behavior:

Each resident is asked how he is doing in school and whether he is relating well to his teacher, whether he is doing his school work, etc. If there were problems, these are usually dealt with in the problem-solving stage of the group meeting. By focusing on school behavior at this stage of the group meeting, we make certain that school behavior is addressed.

6. Group Concerns:

Once all the group members have been addressed, the staff leader asks the group whether there is anything else that needs to be discussed which has an impact on the group. Things that affect the problem, such as privileges, consequences, group activities, including recreation and leisure activities, are common issues presented by the group.

<u>P.R.A.C. Educational Services</u>

P.R.A.C. provides individualized education. A school is operated on-grounds at P.R.A.C. The emphasis of the educational program is on assessing/documenting academic and classroom abilities/ skills, maintaining basic skills and providing successful experiences that will increase the students' interest in education. P.R.A.C. provides Special Education to students who are eligible for Special Education services.

The curriculum consists of Communication Skills (which includes reading, writing, spelling, listening and speaking), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Health Education, Personal Adjustment (Social Skills), Employability Skills and Art.

P.R.A.C. provides 6 hours of school per day with four 90-minute class periods per day. Each student receives three hours of academic classes, 90 minutes of Art and 90 minutes of Physical Education or Health Education per day.

P.R.A.C. Assessment Services - Placement Planning

An important goal of P.R.A.C. is to ensure that each resident receives assessment services which specify problems, assets, goals and treatment recommendation, including identification of an appropriate type of treatment placement. While this process is initiated upon a youth's commitment to M.D.S.S., treatment planning is integrated and finalized at an Interdisciplinary Staffing Conference (I.S.C.). The I.S.C. is designed to bring together persons integral to the planning and treatment process and to facilitate the presentation, discussion and refinement of diagnostic information. The youth, his parents (guardians), D.S.W. and P.R.A.C. staff attend the I.S.C. In preparation for the I.S.C., the D.S.W. completes a family assessment. P.R.A.C. staff prepare Educational and Behavioral Assessment Reports for presentation. P.R.A.C. hosts and chairs the I.S.C.

Assessment is an ongoing process at P.R.A.C. The behaviors and attitudes that each resident exhibits as he participates in the program are observed by center staff and reflected in each resident's token record sheet, level attainment, contract, and in the behavior observation log entries by staff.

Prior to the I.S.C., the P.R.A.C. social worker prepares a Behavioral Assessment Report, which summarizes behavioral strengths and weaknesses that the resident has exhibited during his stay at the center. An Educational Assessment report is prepared by the P.R.A.C. teacher, based on behavior observed in the classroom, and on achievement level scores obtained from the W.R.A.T.-R. and other diagnostic instruments.

The two assessment reports prepared by P.R.A.C. staff are presented at the I.S.C. In addition, a clinical assessment, completed by the Clinic for Child Study, or the center's psychological consultant, is available for discussion at the I.S.C.

Information shared at the I.S.C. is used by the D.S.W. to write the resident's Initial Treatment Plan (I.T.P.). This plan includes specifications of the treatment elements necessary to accomplish goals and the D.S.W.'s decision of an appropriate type of treatment placement. The D.S.W. then initiates the referral process by presenting the case to the Private Agency Review (PAR) committee. [See below].

Other Program Services

While being detained at P.R.A.C., residents receive medical, dental, counseling and other related services. Youth who have stayed at the Wayne County Youth Home (W.C.Y.H.) prior to coming

to P.R.A.C. will have received a medical exam at the W.C.Y.H. Residents have access to a full range of medical and dental services through local clinics and hospitals during their stay at Phoenix.

Ongoing counseling services are provided to the residents by the staff team at P.R.A.C. A psychologist is available under a contractual arrangement to provide psychological evaluations, crisis intervention and consultations. Psychological evaluations of residents may be requested to assist in treatment and placement planning, or to determine or confirm eligibility for Special Education services for referred youth. Consultations are provided to P.R.A.C. staff, as requested, to assist staff in dealing appropriately and therapeutically with the residents who are under our care.

Discharge from Program

The D.S.W. initiates a placement referral through a case assessment committee process (i.e., PAR - Private Agency Review, or CAR - Case Assistance Review). The case assessment committee participants then recommend a specific treatment agency, subject to the D.S.W.'s approval.

Residents are successfully released from the program when they are moved to an ongoing treatment agency. Transporters from the W.R.S. (Wayne Residential Services) Intake Unit are available to provide transportation from P.R.A.C. to the treatment agency.

Upon release, a discharge report is completed by P.R.A.C. staff, summarizing the assessment of the resident and the services provided.